

and will merely repeat our former assertion, that the Depositions are in themselves so very clear and intelligible, that further elucidation is unnecessary.

## THE DRAMATIC LANCET.

No. 1. \*

‘Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri.’  
We pin our faith upon no man’s sleeve !

A BOOK is generally preceded by a preface, and few critics can dispense with a prologue to a new play. Even a minuet cannot be danced without an introductory bow to propitiate the graces ; and a good exordium has always been accounted a principal feature in every public oration. Our great Epic poets, indeed, in defiance of this slavish custom, have dashed at once into the middle of their subject, leaving it to their favourite hero, after escaping from a terrible shipwreck, upon some desert or enchanted island, to record while feasting at a luxurious banquet, prepared by some amorous Goddess, the interesting tale of his past exploits and his perilous adventures. We suppose it was in deference to these high authorities, that our noble friend Lord Byron, who is certainly something more than a “Lord among Wits, and a Wit among Lords,” in his rare, though unequal production of “Don Juan,” has been induced

to leave a wide gap in the middle of his poem, and to keep his readers in cruel suspense, through six or seven cantos, and for nearly as many long and tedious months, how the two fugitive lovers contrived to elude the vengeance of the haughty Guleyrez, and escape being put into a sack and drowned in the river Tigris. For ourselves, although the limits of our publication forbid any long or elaborate disquisition on any topic, and its name, as designated in the Title-page, indicates merely a design to point our instrument at passing abuses, and let out the morbid and peccant humours of the day ; yet, as we wish to be considered on a friendly and sociable footing with our Readers, and, we flatter ourselves, we are already established in their favourable opinion, as amusing and not uninteresting companions ; we have some few little preliminaries to settle, before we can jog on comfortably and quietly together, in our useful and pleasing journey.

Now, then, to the object more immediately in view. It is never too late to retract an error, nor beyond the reach of human ability to correct the most inveterate abuse. Over the *Proscenium* of one of our principal metropolitan theatres, and conspicuously in sight of the whole audience, was formerly placed the following laconic and expressive motto, “*Veluti in Speculum*,” the meaning of which in plain English was, that we might there see ourselves faithfully portrayed ‘*as in a glass*.’ This was very well, and certainly appropriate to the occasion ; but unfortunately the transcriber of this motto had broken poor Priscian’s head ; in other

\* To the present period our theatrical duties have been discharged by two very kind friends.

words, it was bad Latin; the preposition *in*, governing the ablative case, and *speculum* being the objective or accusative case, it ought, therefore, undoubtedly to have been written *veluti in speculo*. Impressed with this conviction, the writer of the present Essay, upon a former occasion, addressed a letter, through the medium of the Morning Chronicle, to the late Mr. John Kemble, who had just then succeeded to the management of the Theatre,—and the mention of whose name almost tempts us to digress for a moment, for the purpose of paying to the remembrance of his transcendent talents the grateful tribute of a line. But a future and a better opportunity will be offered in the course of these Essays, to record the virtues of a man, whose classical erudition and dramatic genius may perhaps have been equalled, but have never been surpassed. — Although the writer of the above letter pointed out the absurdity of the motto as it then stood, and satisfactorily proved his statement, by quotations from Terence and Cicero, two of the best standards for purity of style and grammatical construction; yet, to the surprise of every enlightened scholar, and the disgrace of the national literature, the *um*, or *hum* (as it may more properly be termed) was for several years afterwards suffered to be obtruded on the public taste and understanding. Whether from caprice, or a conviction of its absurdity, we cannot decide; but common sense and propriety have at length triumphed, and the motto is removed.

We have now another equally foolish *misnomer*, which requires

the application of *The Lancet* “to lay bare,” and destroy.

Within the last year an interesting work has issued from the press, intituled “*The Lollards*,” or *Tales of the Fifteenth Century*. In this publication, the author has clearly demonstrated, that on the spot on which one of our Theatres is built, and which is known under the name of Covent Garden, was originally a *Convent*, and surrounded by a *garden*. If this be the fact, and, independently of the author’s testimony, it appears consonant with probability and good sense, what should hinder us from immediately correcting the error, and restoring the just and proper name? It may, perhaps, be urged as an objection, that the priors, abbesses, and nuns that now occupy this famous spot, are of a very different description to those who formerly tenanted these mansions of prodigality and folly; and that the custom of calling it by its present name has prevailed so long as to render it difficult to change. To the first, we answer, that the corruption or abuse of any thing is no argument for the perversion of its original use or meaning; and to the latter we need only say, that if mere custom is to sanction absurdity, it may as well be called *Common Garden Theatre*; for so it is vulgarly styled at present by the ignorant, and uninstructed part of the community, and with much more propriety; for it has indeed grown quite *common*, considering the dearth of dramatic genius, and the indecent scenes that are nightly witnessed both within and without its walls.—The progress of knowledge, and the intellectual

exertions of a few enlightened and judicious minds, have already produced wonderful effects in the way of general improvement and reformation. "Brummagem" has been refined into Birmingham. The *Bell Savage Inn*, Ludgate-hill, as it was formerly called, and designated by a large bell suspended over a monkey, is now restored to its proper name of *La Belle Sauvage* (the beautiful savage). And *Mary-bone* parish acknowledges her patroness and tutelary guardian in *Mary la bone* (the good Mary). Why should our theatres alone, which profess to be schools of morality, and vehicles for the production of chaste wit and superior genius, be behind hand with the great march of intellectual improvement, or continue to perpetuate errors, for which there can be neither justification nor excuse.—We call upon *Mr. Charles Kemble*, who is now the acting manager, and who has the reputation of inheriting many of the estimable qualities of his late much-lamented and excellent brother, to step forward and rescue the stage from the ridicule of foreigners, and the reproach of the discerning and judicious part of the community. After having pointed out this glaring absurdity, he cannot now plead ignorance on the subject. The introduction of the letter *n* is not only required by the suggestions of common sense, but even on the principles of the *Euphoniæ gratia* (if we may be allowed the term), for the sake of the harmony, which renders it more grateful to the ear, and easier of pronunciation. Let but the change be forthwith announced in all the play-bills and advertisements of the theatre, and

we will stake our credit that (although, from its apparent singularity and the force of habit, the alteration may at first perhaps provoke a smile or a sneer from the superficial and ignorant,) inquiry and discussion will soon lead to its universal adoption; and our theatres, in compliance with the instruction of *Hamlet* to the players, will no longer incur the reproach of not "suiting the word to the action," or making the sound an echo to the sense. We have prefaced our *Strictures on the Drama*, which we mean in future to continue regularly and periodically, from time to time, with these reflections—that our readers might be prepared for the critiques which will follow. We had intended to have entered into a review of *Mr. Young's Hamlet*, accompanied with some animadversions on his peculiar style of acting, as contrasted with that of Messrs. *Kean* and *Macready*; but want of time and space compels us to defer it, till a future Number.

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#### MEDICAL AND SURGICAL INTELLIGENCE.

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*On the Effects of Stricture of the Urethra, particularly of the sacculated State of the Bladder, with an Inquiry into a Mode of Treatment to avert this latter consequence of stricture, which is often fatal.* By JOHN SHAW, Esq.—Read Feb. 25, 1823.

[From the Medico-Chirurgical Transactions.]

[Concluded from p. 94.]

While upon this subject, I should not omit to allude to certain cases, which though not un-